

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising ~~any one of the following:~~
 - (a) — a nucleic acid sequence encoding a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 8;
 - (b) — ~~a nucleic acid sequence at least 90% identical to the nucleic acid sequence of (a) above;~~
 - (c) — ~~a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide wherein the polypeptide has conservative amino acid substitutions to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 8; or~~
 - (d) — ~~a fragment of the nucleic acid sequence of (a), (b) or (c) above wherein the fragment comprises at least 20 nucleotides.~~
2. (Original) The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid is selected from the group consisting of DNA and RNA.
3. (Currently Amended) The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid comprises an open reading frame that encodes a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 8 ~~or its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.~~
4. (Currently Amended) The nucleic acid of claim 1 wherein said nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide ~~comprising~~ consisting of an amino acid of SEQ ID NO: 8.
5. (Currently Amended) The nucleic acid of ~~claim 3~~ claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid encodes a mature form of a polypeptide comprising an amino acid of SEQ ID NO: 8, ~~a mutant or variant thereof.~~
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Currently Amended) ~~An oligonucleotide~~ A nucleic acid sequence that is complementary to ~~and hybridizes under stringent conditions with~~ the nucleic acid of claim 1.
8. – 9. (Cancelled)

10. (Original) A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 1.
11. (Currently Amended) ~~A cell~~ An isolated cell comprising the vector of claim 10.
12. (Currently Amended) The cell of claim 11, wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell comprising the nucleic acid sequence ~~which is SEQ ID NO: 7, its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.~~
13. (Currently Amended) A ~~pharmaceutical~~ composition comprising the nucleic acid of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
14. (Original) A process for producing a polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of claim 1, said process comprising:
 - a) providing the cell of claim 11;
culturing said cell under conditions sufficient to express said polypeptide; and
 - b) recovering said polypeptide,thereby producing said polypeptide.
15. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 14, wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell.
16. – 17. (Cancelled)